

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 362
INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS IN TEACHER'S STRIKE

REF: LIMA 4891

1. GOP MINISTRY OF EDUCATION JUNE 5 ANNOUNCED THE OPENING OF SUMMARY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES AGAINST 77 TEACHERS ACCUSED OF "ACTS OF VIOLENCE" AND ALSO THE MINISTRY'S INTENT TO HIRE REPLACEMENTS FOR THE 77 IRED PROFESSORS IMMEDIATELY. ALTHOUGH REPRESENTATIVES OF SUTEP JUNE 5 DECLARED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO REOPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITHE GOP, THE SAME REPS INSISTED THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE THE INDEFINITE STRIKE. NON-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS AMONG THE TEACHERS MET SUNDAY, JUNE 4, TO ANALYZE THE STRIKE AND DISCUSS FUTURE PLANS. THEIR CONCLUSION WAS THAT THE STRIKE WAS INEFFECTIVE AND THAT PROVIDED THE GOP WOULD CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TEACHERS, THEY SHOULD RETURN TO WORK. AT MID-WEEK SOME LABOR OBSERVERS THINK THAT THE FORCE OF THE STRIKE IS FADING AND THAT MORE TEACHERS ARE RETURNING TO THEIR CLASSES. NONETHELESS, THE RANK AND FILE OF THE TEACHERS REMAINED CONFUSED
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AND DIVIDED. STRIKE LEADERS POINT TO THE MONTHLY BASIC SALARY OF A POLICEMAN (24,000 SOLES), IN COMPARISON TO THE SALARY FOR TEACHERS WITH 10 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF 14,000 SOLES. THIS ECONOMIC APPEAL ACCOUNTS FOR MUCH OF THE STRIKE'S CONTINUING SUPPORT. HOWEVER, MORE TEACHERS APPEAR TO REALIZE THAT THE GOP CANNOT OR WILL NOT RPT NOT INCREASE SALARIES SOON AND THAT INSTEAD THEIR OWN JOBS ARE THREATENED BY THE GOP'S ATTITUDE. (THE GOP ASSERTS THAT

MEETING EVEN SOME OF THE TEACHER'S DEMANDS WOULD INCREASE THE GOVERNMENT BUDGET SIGNIFICANTLY.)

2. CERTAIN SUTEP LEADERS WHO HAVE ALWAYS CONDEMNED THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AS A "FARCE" ARE STILL TRYING TO CREATE PROBLEMS SERIOUS ENOUGH TO CAUSE THE POSTPONEMENT OR CANCELLATION OF THE ELECTIONS. THEY ARE COUNTING ON THE BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUE TO GIVE THEM ENOUGH SUPPORT TO PROVOKE MORE GOVERNMENT ARRESTS AND DIRINGS. HOWEVER,

SUTEP'S LEADERSHIP IS NOT FULLY AGREED ON THIS ISSUE; MOSCOW LINE COMMUNISTS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE BEING PRESSURED TO AVOID JEOPARDIZING THE ELECTIONS. NONETHELESS, THE "ULTRAS" HAVE KEPT SOME STRIKEERS WITH THEM. CURRENT PLANS ARE FOR THOSE IN DANGER OF LOSING THEIR JOBS TO RETURN TO WORK WHILE A NEW GROUP GOES OUT ON STRIKE. THIS "REVOLVING STRIKE" SYSTEM PRESUMABLY COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR A FEW MORE DAYS ALTHOUGH THE GOP PROBABLY WOULD SOON FIRE OR SUSPEND TEACHERS FOR ANY ABSENTEEISM WITHOUT REGARD TO CURRENT REGULATION THAT ONLY THOSE ABSENT FOR 10 CONSECUTIVE DAYS CAN BE FIRED.

3. COMMENT: WE DOUBT THAT AT THIS POINT GOP LEADERS WANT TO USE THE SUTEP STRIKE AS A PRETEXT FOR POSTPONING THE ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, THE COMBINATION OF EXTREMISTS AMONG SUTEP AND THOSE IN THE MILITARY OPPOSED TO ELECTIONS POSES AN ADDED CHALLENGE TO THE ALREADY FRAGILE POLITICAL SITUATION.

DECON 6/6/79.

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